

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claim 5, CANCEL claim 8, and ADD new claims 9-12 in accordance with the following:

1. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An information collection and distribution system for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected to a network,

wherein the server transmits communication blocks including at least addresses of the plurality of clients and pieces of distribution information to one client of the plurality of clients through said network;

said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication blocks to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

said one client in each of said plurality of clients obtains the distribution information from the communication blocks, and circulates the communication blocks in which distribution results are set to a client next in the order on the basis of the destination addresses;

a final client of a last circulation destination which has received the pieces of distribution information last in each of said plurality of groups transmits the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups; and

said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups merges the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block to said server.

2. (ORIGINAL) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 1, wherein said server recognizes a client which fails in distribution on the basis of the distribution result set in the communication block transmitted from said one client, and re-transmits the communication block to said failed client.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 1, wherein each client other than said one client and said final client transmits

the communication block to said one client as intermediate notification when a next client as the circulation destination is in a stop state, and

said one client relays the communication block transmitted from said client to said server.

4. (CANCELLED)

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information collection and distribution system for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected ~~to~~ with a network,

wherein said server transmits a communication blocksblock including at least addresses of the plurality of clients to one client of the plurality of clients through the network;

said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

said each-one client in each-out of said plurality of elientsgroups sets pieces of collection information in the communication blocksblock, sets a collection result in the communication block, and circulates the communication blocksblock-in-which-collection-results-are-set to a next client next-in the-an order based on the-basis-of the addresses;

a final client of a last circulation destination which has received ~~the pieces of distribution information~~ the communication block last in eachout of said plurality of elientsgroups transmits the communication block to said one client that has portioned the clients into groups; and

said one client merges the communication blocksblock from said final client of each circulation destination-plurality-of-clients to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block to said server.

6. (ORIGINAL) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 5, wherein said server recognizes a client which fails in collection on the basis of the collection result set in the communication block transmitted from said one client, and re-transmits the communication block to said failed client.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 5, wherein each client other than said one client and said final client transmits the communication block to said one client as intermediate notification when a next client as the circulation destination is in a stop state, and

said one client relays the communication block transmitted from said client to said server.

8. (CANCELLED)

9. (NEW) An information collection and distribution method for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected with a network, comprising:

transmitting a communication block including at least addresses of the plurality of clients and pieces of distribution information to one client of the plurality of clients through said network from the server;

partitioning all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relaying the communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

receiving the distribution information from the communication block via said one client in each of the plurality of clients, setting a distribution result in the communication block, and circulating the communication block to a next client in an order based on destination addresses;

transmitting the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups from a final client when said final client of a last circulation destination has received the communication block; and

merging the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relaying the merged communication block to said server.

10. (NEW) An information collection and distribution method for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected with a network, comprising:

transmitting a communication block including at least addresses of the plurality of clients to one client of the plurality of clients through said network from the server;

partitioning all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relaying the communication block to one client in each of the plurality groups;

receiving the communication block via said one client in each of the plurality of clients, setting pieces of collection information and a collection result in the communication block, and circulating the communication block to a next client in an order based on destination addresses;

transmitting the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients

into groups from a final client when said final client of a last circulation destination has received the communication block; and

merging the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relaying the merged communication block to said server.

11. (NEW) A method for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality clients in a network, comprising:

partitioning the plurality of clients with the exception of one client into a plurality of groups and relaying a communication block including at least addresses to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

circulating the communication block in which distribution results are set to a client next in an order based on destination addresses; and

merging the communication block to form a merged communication block and relaying the merged communication block to the server, wherein a final client of a last circulation destination in each of said plurality of groups transmits the communication block to the one client.

12. (NEW) An information collection and distribution system for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected with a network,

wherein the server transmits a communication block including at least addresses of the plurality of clients and pieces of distribution information to one client of the plurality of clients through said network;

said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication block to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

said one client in each of said plurality of groups obtains the distribution information from the communication block, sets a distribution result in the communication block, and circulates the communication block to a next client in an order based on the destination addresses;

a final client of a last circulation destination which has received the communication block last in each of said plurality of groups transmits the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups; and

said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups merges the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block

and relays the merged communication block to said server.